

Do You Know These 10 Exercises For Boosting Happiness? Probably Not.

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Here are 10 exercises that need more attention, and yes, character strengths are direct or indirect aspects of each.

1.) Letter from the future

Write a letter from “your future self” to yourself in the present. In the letter, describe how positive your life is, the many goals you’ve achieved, and how you used your character strengths to get there.

2.) Social spending

Identify a friend or stranger in need. Spend a small amount of money on your friend (e.g., a food purchase or a token item).

3.) Signature strengths at work

Examine your top five character strengths on the VIA Survey. Write about how you can use each of these in your average workday. Be concrete and specific.

4.) Positive mental time travel

Before you go to bed at night, close your eyes and vividly imagine at least four positive events that could possibly happen the next day. See yourself using your character strengths in each event.

5.) Three funny things

At the end of the day, write down three funny things that happened to you that day and why these things occurred.

6.) Mental subtraction

Mentally take away a positive event in your life. Contemplate what your life would be like without one of the good things in your life, e.g., your health, a good relationship, a safe neighborhood, or a particular achievement. Write about how your life would be different without that good thing.

7.) Temporal scarcity

Make a conscious effort to realize how little time you have left before a scheduled endpoint, such as your retirement, graduation, an upcoming surgery, etc. Write about the value and importance of your current situation and how time is scarce and precious.

8.) One door closes, another door opens

Write about a moment in your life when a negative event led to unforeseen positive consequences. Write about this once a day for one week.

9.) Build up a lower character strength

While working with signature/higher strengths might be the optimal approach, research does show benefit (at least in the short-run) to trying to improve your lesser strengths. Use one of your signature strengths to give a boost to one of your lowest strengths.

10.) The gift of time

Offer at least three “gifts of time” this week by helping three different people in some way. These may be small or large acts but it’s important to do things that are outside of your planned activities for the week.

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